

## ON THE TRAIL OF THE MOTION PICTURE

Putting It Over for  
The Idea Alone

By Virginia Tracy

"He wrote it himself," the enthusiast who was leading us to see King Vidor's "The Turn of the Road" eagerly explained. "And he produced it himself—not a star in it—he wanted to put it over on the idea alone!"

These valiant words were cordial to our heart. What could be more hopeful from any picture than the knowledge that somebody had had something to say and had put up a stiff fight to say it? And indeed it was somewhere in the third reel we sat wrapped in a quite particular complacency, secure that we and the picture were about the most intelligent things going, other pictures and other spectators scarcely running in the same class. We kept telling ourselves, "Oh, but this cannot be! It simply doesn't exist—we're dreaming! Nobody could hope to put over anything as good as this—people wouldn't notice it—they wouldn't be able to tell it from life!" This is what made the fall when it did come such an extremely unsettling business. As we sat in the dust we should like to have been sure whether the picture had given way or whether we had tumbled. And to this minute we are not entirely up from that dust.

Besides money, Perry, of Perry's Lion Works, has one idol, his son Paul; and Paul had gone in for socialism. But this very young Socialist is also a very young man and all the time not spent in his struggle with his father he spends in the society of two sisters. The younger is the little belle of Perryville; the "stoop" is always crowded with her beaux; her own struggle with her father is about going motoring with young men and how low in the neck a minister's daughter may wear her dancing dresses.

The serious older sister, June—played by Helen Jerome Eddy, a name we simply mustn't forget—is merely the background to the festivities of the little beauty. Alone with June her sister's callers are bored and listless, and yet when Paul Perry, with his atmosphere of books and brains and ideals, begins coming to the festivities too, she has the fond ingenueness to believe that it is her company he comes for.

To advance upon the story thus hastily gives it, however, a harshness and fixedness entirely alien to the flexibility, the sensitive truth to daily living, the absence of a single bromide or mechanical touch, with which it is realized upon the screen. There the acting and the direction are of such perfection that they seem wholly blended in an instinctive articulation of life. It is all, of course, essentially American, as if we were simply looking through a window at a little well known world presented in a clarifying light. If you think of what "Little Women" ought to have been and wasn't, modernized to our day, you will have it—all the sense of family affection, of neighborliness, the really extraordinary interplay of slight but perfectly realized relationships, the free, idle, business and self-centredness and charm of indulged youth, and then the moment of an acting exquisite enough to make us ashamed of gaudier things; the moment when, at the wedding, it is time for the bride's sister to kiss the bridegroom, whom she loves.

The wedding has not been opposed by Perry, as it would have been in an ordinary plot-for-trouble. He is only too glad to marry his young Socialist to a sweet girl who is also a luxury-loving butterfly, to be kept in frocks and



Marguerite Clark, Rivoli.



James Montgomery Flagg acting like a hero Arnold Genthe photo

him go—even the faithful June pausing on the porch to pray. It was the turn in the road for us.

Far back in the happy beginning we had been aware in the titles—though in the titles alone—of a certain didactic stiffness, and as soon as June began to question whether evil is really sent by God we knew we were to receive some moral lesson. But even we are not entirely above moral lessons and followed the picture with interest to its morality; the morality of Christian Science. This is where the road has been leading from the first and the road's final turn takes place in the mind of the minister, who has been shaken by his daughter's death and his son-in-law's reproaches from his orthodox belief, but whose struggles are crystallized only when he sees his little grandchild playing with wasps and is told by the child—the blessed little Ben Alexander of "Hearts of the World"—"They won't hurt you if you don't hurt them." He knows then that there is no such thing as evil.

Otherwise, we take it, he would have been pretty depressed; with one daughter dead, the other, the family's only wage earner, dismissed by her employer for rejecting his iniquitous advances; his own pulpit lost through his changed views; his grandson stoned off the grounds of the multi-millionaire grandfather up the road while the boy's own father is sunk in degradation and, we fear—though the cutting necessary for our abominable programme system jumps too much for us to be sure—crime. But at this lowest ebb in the family fortunes labor takes on a hand.

Labor, it may be startled to learn, decides to enter the millionaire's house at midnight and force him to sign his Magna Charta at the pistol's point. The old man refuses, is bound to a chair, and the intruding laborers line up against the wall to shoot him. But an impression that as they lined up in order to improve their aim. But for such a midnight nature has provided another storm and in one of its lightning flashes the little grandchild steps into the room! Knowing only that grandpa throws stones at him, he has come for fear grandpa might be lonely to-night.

The heart of man cannot resist the spectacle: the laborers repent; the millionaire signs the charter and clasps the child to his bosom. When the little boy goes home he finds his father, now a tramp, asleep in the hayloft; the father says that he is looking for the True God, the child explains the principles of Christian Science, the question of the father's soul is answered and all hearts are reunited. Now we should like to ask that ultimate creature, the Public, and more particularly the Christian Science public, one desperate question: Is this nonsense?

If so, how came it to be written by the artist in genuineness of the earlier reels? If not, why was there only one servant in the house of the multi-millionaire when the laborers arrived? Why did those laborers, surely unaware that the child was to swing in on the lightning, leave the front door open behind them? Why was the child followed by six fox terrier puppies, unscattered and unspotted by the storm? Why were these things done by that author-director whose earlier truth of sight and exactness of touch were so fine that now we actually cannot take our own word against him? Have we such a blind side to religious revelation that we mistake poetry for ban-combe and fire for a gas log? Or is it that the religion has been somewhat unrevealingly revealed, even by lightning, puppies, babes seeking out stone-throwing millionaires, repentant murderers and fathers in the hayloft? "He wanted to put it over for the idea alone!" When even the sincerest idea wants to be propaganda, what is truth?

Any one who knows may speak.

Shadows on  
The Screen

Mahlon Hamilton, selected by J. A. Brest to play opposite to Kitty Gordon in her current screen vehicle "Adele," will also be seen in that star's support in her forthcoming United Picture Theatres production of William Anthony McGuire's story, "Playthings of Passion."

Norina Talmadge's next picture will be a Russian one, on which she is now at work at Saranac Lake. This story is by H. H. Van Loan and will precede "Nancy Lee," despite the fact that "Nancy" is now being cut and titled. Pedro de Cordoba will play Prince Mikhail. Other members of the cast are Marguerite Clayton, Matilda Brundage, Stuart Holmes, Charles Gerard, Marc McDermott and Harry Sothern. Chet Withey directed.

The screen rights to "Told in the Hills," by Marah Ellis Ryan, have been purchased by the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation. The filming of the picture will be started at an early date.

"Virtuous Men" is ready for presentation. The picture, a Ralph Ince attraction, personally directed by Mr. Ince, was seven months in the making. It cost over \$150,000 to film, contains 10,000 superlatives, many spectacular scenes and a thrilling forest fire. For this effect 500 acres of forest were burned over.

Director John S. Robertson, Assistant Director Frank Walton and Camera-man Jacques Montanar and the members of the cast of "Come Out of the Kitchen," Marguerite Clark's coming Paramount picture, have gone to Pass Christian, Miss., where the work of filming the exteriors for the production has already commenced. An unusual cast has been picked for this screen version of Alice Duer Miller's well-known play. It includes Eugene O'Brien, leading man; Crauford Kent, Frances Kaye, Bradley Barker, Albert M. Hackett, May Kitson and George Stevens.

R. S. Moss's photoplay, "Break the News to Mother," was given a midnight private showing before a representative gathering of state rights buyers and exhibitors at the Hamilton Theatre last Thursday. The screen version, however, is an original story by Hugh MacNair Kahler, one of America's best known magazine writers. The scenario is by Garfield Thompson and the photography by André Barlatier. The picture was produced under the personal direction of Julius Steger.

Vice-President E. W. Hammons, of the Educational Film Corporation, announces that the feature of the third of "The Photoplay Magazine Screen

Supplement" is to be an extensive study of Geraldine Farrar in her new home on West Seventy-fourth Street. Miss Farrar put apartment dwelling into the past tense recently and, in a slender four story palace all her own, found space for the first time in her life to place her art treasures and the trophies of operatic triumphs secured in all the capitals of the world. Julian Johnson, editor of "Photoplay Magazine," hearing of the new home, immediately communicated with Miss Farrar and asked her to permit a "visual record" of herself in her domestic surroundings.

Houdini has recently gained considerable recognition as a writer. He has written two series of "Children's Goodnight Stories," one printed in "McClure's Magazine" and the other in "The New York World." "The Unmasking of Robert Houdini," a book on magic; a number of Christmas stories, published in England, and several other volumes. For two years he was editor of "The Conjuror," the magician's magazine.

Scott Dunlap, formerly an assistant director with William Farnum, is now a full-fledged director in the William Fox organization at the Hollywood (Cal.) studios.

Eileen Cotty, fifteen-year-old teen dancer with the "Good Morning, Judge" show, has demonstrated a few of her latest steps for the Universal Screen Magazine camera man.

"Our Teddy" Seen by  
Thousand Boy Scouts

McClure Productions have been commended for the splendid Americanizing influence the picture "Our Teddy" is having in all sections of the country. The following letter from James E. West, chief scout executive of the Boy Scouts of America, pays tribute to the wholesome inspiration "Our Teddy" is furnishing to thousands of young Americans:

"I was greatly impressed and pleased with the motion picture story of the life of former President Roosevelt which I saw at an anniversary meeting attended by over a thousand Boy Scouts last Saturday. Colonel Roosevelt's life is an inspiration to boyhood, and I feel it is a fortunate thing for the country that this picture was made before the great man passed away."

Gray Seal Star Nearly  
Made Film Debut in India

Wheeler Dryden, who will be starred in a series of Gray Seal Comedies, would have made his film debut in India had not the war prevented.

Mr. Dryden was in Bombay when he was approached by a Mr. P. J. Marzban, a Parsee, to pose for a Gujarati novel. Mr. Dryden was chosen because of his striking resemblance to the Parsees, who are the highest type of Orientals in India.

The photographs were such a success that Mr. Marzban decided to adapt one of his Gujarati novels as a feature photoplay. The necessary arrangements were made, but owing to the shipping restrictions it was impossible to obtain any raw film stock. Had the latter obstacle not arisen Mr. Dryden would have been the first person to write, direct and appear in a Parsee film production.

James Montgomery Flagg  
Obliges With Six Words

By Harriette Underhill

We didn't try to see the parade last Tuesday because we knew that we had only one chance in 2,000,000 and no one had invited us to sit down and we hadn't been asked to join the Mayor's party; so instead of going out and maybe getting killed we decided to do some work, then we might spend the next day over in Fort Lee watching Allan Dwan direct a picture with a clear conscience. (We mean our conscience—not his.)

Of course, interviewing people is only work nominally. We have to call it that because we get paid for it; and when you have an interviewee like James Montgomery Flagg—well, did you ever meet James Montgomery Flagg?

Once, long ago, oh, ten or twelve or sixteen or eighteen years ago, we posed for Mr. Flagg. He made a magazine cover of a girl that didn't look a bit like us and labelled it "Love's Awakening" or "Spring" or something like that. Just once during the session he spoke to us. He said, "Your eyes are green, aren't they?"

So all those years we never liked him until we saw him play "Perfectly Fiendish Flanagan," and for that we forgave him all of his transgressions.

The interview was arranged over the telephone. Mr. Flagg said he would be in his studio at 6 o'clock, and how long would it take, and we said fifteen minutes would be ample time and six words were all that would be necessary.

And then we stayed an hour and a half, and should like to have stayed longer only Mr. Flagg was going to the theatre and so were we.

He had the six words prepared for us, however, and he immediately gave them to us to prove that he was in earnest.

"Now, you must say, 'Mr. Flagg, do you write your titles as well as your stories?' and I shall say, 'Better!'"

"Very well, we'll make a note of that and can promise you that it will appear in the interview. Do you remember us, Mr. Flagg?"

"Yes, I do, but I can't think where, nor how."

"Don't you remember 'Spring'?" we began.

"Ah, yes. But you weren't one of those frightened girls who went around with a copy of 'The Common Law' under your arm, were you, consulting it on every occasion?"

"No, indeed; we carried a book on Socialism at that period and were all imbued with that classes and masses thing. The reason we didn't like you was because you wore white silk socks and pumps in the morning and paid us 50 cents an hour for posing. We thought that you thought that you were classes and we were masses."

"You see, you didn't give us a chance to tell you that we were writing the great American novel and were looking for atmosphere."

"Well, well, isn't it a small?"

"Yes," we interrupted, "a small cloud that never pours," for we felt well enough acquainted by this time to act natural; and a little later we got so well acquainted that we risked our favorite joke about the man who put creamed spinach on his hair by mistake, thinking that it was asparagus. It went so well that Mr. Flagg added it to his list.

And then we asked Jimmie Flagg (everybody calls him Jimmie who doesn't call him James Montgomery) how he came to make pictures—movies—in the first place.

"Well," he answered, "You know my first pictures were pretty girl pictures. Some one came to me and asked me if I would lend my name to some films called 'Girls You All Know,' or some such thing of the sort, and I said that I should not lend my name to anything unless I did it myself."

"As soon as I got started the thing

interested me and I saw great possibilities, so I began to do satirical comedies. I think the word comedy is a misnomer as applied to most of the things which are shown on the screen. They are slapstick or burlesque, but not comedies."

"Oh, but Mr. Flagg, no one in the world ever made comedies like yours! As long as we live we shall remember 'Flanagan' as the most joyous occasion of our life, and 'Beresford of the Ba-boons' was even funnier than 'Flanagan'."

"Yes, so I thought, but every one does not agree with you and me. I received letters from all over the country asking me what they were all about, and one exhibitor wrote, 'I bought your comedies, but I shall keep them on my shelf. I could not let my patrons see them.'"

Poor patrons! To be thus deprived of the best fun they ever missed the chance of having.

"But please do not deprive the rest of us of your comedies just because some non-commuters do not know what you are doing. Make another picture like 'Flanagan.' There are so many other subjects to be treated in the same way."

"I'm tired of the movies, and when this series is finished I'm not going to do anything more. I may do something in the drama; I'm not sure."

"What are you going to do next?" we asked. "One like 'The Last Bottle' or another satire?"

"It's going to be a satire on all sorts of films—educational, scenic, comedy, and feature."

"And now if you'll give us a beautiful picture of yourself to use with the interview—"

"Would you prefer a beautiful one or one that looks like me?"

"Either will do. Here, we like this one, where you are looking like a cave-man here!"

The picture we selected may be seen just to the east of this. It looks just like the original, if you ever can catch him when he looks like that.

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BROADWAY  
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Direction M. KASHININTIMATE AND  
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Bolsheviki"A CAMERA ACCOUNT OF A  
TRIP INTO LENIN'S LAND.

## AMUSEMENTS

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BILLIE  
BURKE(BY ARRANGEMENT with F. ZIEGFELD, Jr.)  
in "Good Gracious, Annabelle!"  
A Paramount PictureBy Clara Kumins  
Directed by George Melford.  
WHAT IN THE WORLD DID ANNABELLE DO?  
Do! Heavens alive, my dear, what did Annabelle do? Didn't you hear? She has shocked and scandalized all of our set. And that isn't all. You'll just have to see it in a coking motion picture at the Strand. Don't miss it! It's inconceivable! Really.REDFERN HOLLINSHEAD (Tenor)  
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QUARTET  
CHRISTIE COMEDY—TOPICAL REVIEW.  
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CARL EDUARDE, Conductor.AMUSEMENTS  
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DIRECTION of HUGO RIESENFELD  
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MR. & MRS. DREW  
"The Amateur Lady"MARGUERITE CLARK  
"Three Men and a Girl"CHAPLIN REVIVAL  
"His Prehistoric Past"CHARLES RAY  
"The Sheriff's Son"WITH CARRANZA IN MEXICO  
ANNIE ROSNER, SOLOIST  
HUBERT & ALBANO, DUET  
HAROLD LLOYD, COMEDYRIALTO ORCHESTRA  
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VIOLA DANA, "The Parisian Tiger"Loew's American Roof  
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KITH'S  
Concerts Sunday, 2:15 & 8:15. Week of March 31  
Mat. ALL-STAR BILL. Eve.  
2.00 Overture 8.00  
2.05 Riverside Pictorial 8.05  
2.12 De Witt, Harris & Co. 8.12  
2.24 Masters & Kraft 8.24  
2.34 CHILSON-OKMAN. 8.34  
2.54 BERT WILLIAMS 8.54  
3.13 FORD SISTERS & CO. 9.13  
3.27 Julius Leinhardt a Harmonist 9.27  
3.34 LILLIAN SHAW 9.34  
4.02 EDMUND HAYES & CO. 10.02  
4.22 VAN & SCHENCK 10.22  
4.37 Margaret Edwards 10.37  
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ON "WALLACE" LIFE  
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MICHO ILOV-PUL THEVENAZ  
TULLE LINDA-JESMIN KLOCH  
GREENWICH TO-NIGHT AT 9 O'CLOCKRIVERSIDE B'WAY  
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